

### Are Cable Operators Required to Make Files Available to the Public? What Are the Requirements?

- Cable operators serving 1,000 or more subscribers must maintain a public inspection file.
- FCC rules require cable operators to maintain and make available to the public the following files: political files; sponsorship identification; EEO reports; commercial records for children's programming; ownership records; the location of the system's principal head end; and a list of television broadcast stations carried by the system in fulfillment of the must-carry requirements.
- The public inspection files must be available at the office that the cable operator maintains for the ordinary collection of subscriber charges, resolution of subscriber complaints, and other business, or at any accessible place in the community served by the system (such as a public registry for documents or an attorney's office).
- The public inspection files must be made available to the public at any time during regular business hours.
- Cable operators must honor requests made in person to reproduce documents contained in the public inspection files.
- FCC rules allow cable operators to charge a reasonable fee for copies.

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- Requests for copies of documents in the public inspection files must be fulfilled within a reasonable time, not to exceed seven days.
- Cable operators may choose, but are not required, to honor requests for copies made by mail. If a consumer wants access to a public inspection file, he or she should request the file in person.
- Cable operators have the option of maintaining all or part of their public inspection files in a computer database rather than in paper files.

### What Should I do if My Cable Operator Fails to Comply with the Public Inspection File Requirements?

You may file a complaint with the FCC. Complaints should include as much of the following information as possible:

- Name of the cable provider;
- Name, address, and telephone number of complainant;
- Description, in as much detail as possible, of the facts underlying the complaints; and
- Date the incident occurred.

#### Mail complaints to:

FCC, Enforcement Bureau  
Investigations & Hearings Division  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554.

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## Can I Find Out What Information My Cable Operator Has Collected About Me?

A cable operator is required to notify its subscribers at least once every year (and new subscribers at the time service begins) about the nature of any personally identifiable information that will be collected. The operator must notify the subscriber of the scope, frequency and purpose of the information collected; the period during which this information will be maintained; the times and places at which the subscriber may have access to such information; and any limitations placed on the cable operator with respect to the collection and disclosure of this information, as well as the subscriber's rights to enforce these limitations. In addition, cable operators must provide a subscriber access to all personally identifiable information about the subscriber at reasonable times and at a convenient place. Cable operators must also provide subscribers reasonable opportunities to correct any errors contained in the information.

## What Action Can I Take Against My Cable Operator if It Has Violated the Subscriber Privacy Provisions?

You may file suit in a United States District Court. The court may award actual damages, punitive damages, reasonable attorneys' fees, and other reasonable litigation costs.

## Where to Go For Additional Information and Assistance

For further information about Record Retention & Subscriber Privacy issues, please visit the FCC's Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau at: [www.fcc.gov/cgb](http://www.fcc.gov/cgb).

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*For this or any other consumer publication in an accessible format (electronic ASCII text, Braille, large print, or audio) please write or call us at the address or phone number below, or send an e-mail to [FCC504@fcc.gov](mailto:FCC504@fcc.gov).*

*To receive information on this and other FCC consumer topics through the Commission's electronic subscriber service, click on <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/contacts>.*

*This document is for consumer education purposes only and is not intended to affect any proceeding or cases involving this subject matter or related issues.*

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Federal Communications Commission ■ Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau ■ 445 12th St., SW ■ Washington, DC 20554  
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